THE RAGTIMER

JULY 1972

AUGUST 1972

PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

RECORDS FOR SALE

As a service to members, THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc., is currently in a position to fill orders for the following records. All prices quoted include charge for postage.

EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC - $6.00 each

EBM #1 - Eubie Blake featuring Ivan Harold Browning.

BIOGRAPH - $6.00 each (Piano Roll Recordings)

BLP1005Q - Vol. 2 Thomas "Fats" Waller 1924 - 31

BLP1006Q - Scott Joplin 1916

(See Record Review by TEX WYNDHAM in this issue of THE RAGTIMER)

BLP1008Q - Vol. 2 Scott Joplin 1900 -10

NONESUCH - $4.00 each

H-71248 - Scott Joplin Piano Rags - Joshua Rifkin

H-71257 - Heliotrope Bouquet Piano Rags - William Bolcom

H-71264 - Scott Joplin Piano Rags Vol. 2 - Joshua Rifkin

(NEW OFFERING - COVER ART WORK PICTURE OF SCOTT JOPLIN REMOVABLE FOR FRAMING)

ARHOOLIE - $6.00 each

1058 - New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra

(NEW OFFERING - seven piece orchestra - includes Creole Belles, B & W Rag, The Entertainer, The Ragtime Dance, The Chrysanthemum, Maple Leaf Rag and six other titles)

- STILL AVAILABLE -
(Don't Miss Out On This)

ANNIVERSARY YEAR

SURPRISE SHEET MUSIC OFFER

We have unexpectedly acquired a limited supply of four different ORIGINAL printings of large-size Ragtime sheet music in unused condition featuring multi-coloured title covers. This music is almost a unique discovery and seemingly kept from the public view for more than 60 years in order that THE RAGTIME SOCIETY would come into its possession in time for a special highlighting of our 10th Anniversary Year. The music is at once a collector's find and for many will offer an opportunity to create suitably framed conversation piece wall mountings:

LOUISIANNA RAG - (Leon M. Block)
(See photo on back cover of THE RAGTIMER Jan./Feb. 1971)

TURKISH TROPHIES - (Sara B. Egan)
(See photo on back cover of THE RAGTIMER Mar./Apr. 1971)

WEDDING BELLS RAG - (Al. B. Coney)
(See photo on back cover of THE RAGTIMER May/June 1971)

DYNAMITE - A NOISY RAG - (P. Biese & F. H. Klickman)

OFFERED AS A LOT OF FOUR POSTPAID - $7.50

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc.
8th ANNUAL BASH
1972

We look forward to
meeting you on
Saturday, October 14th
at the CARA INN
Toronto

This issue of THE RAGTIMER includes particulars

Summertime means vacation time and a change of pace. Ragtime and recreation make good companions. The search for live ragtime, old ragtime sheet music and piano rolls often provides part of the holiday fun. Whatever your activities may be, we hope you will have an enjoyable summer. If you plan to attend the bash in October please take time out to send along your registration and then make your hotel accomodation reservation.

On May 6th Toronto Ragtimers got together for another Mini-bash at the Royal Canadian Curling Club. The attendance and enthusiastic participation makes it apparent that these periodic parties are gaining in popularity. Milton Davis played ragtime guitar solos including "Maple Leaf Rag" and "Swipesy" as a novel departure from the many piano performances by ragtime pianists in attendance. The trend toward ragtime guitar is beginning to develop. We are going to hear more about ragtime guitar as recording companies respond to a growing interest among our modern youth. At least one ragtime guitar recording has already been released.

As promised, we include in this issue an additional (but final for now) article by Roger Hankins headed "THE PRELUDES TO MAPLE LEAF RAG". (What a title for a coda). Now we can presume that the expertly conducted psychoanalysis of our old friend "Maple Leaf Rag" will permit the patient to return to its regular haunts in the

Concluded on Page 17

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A JOHN ARPIN PROFILE

by Jack Cuff

JOHN ARPIN

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY is greatly indebted to John for the inspiration and enthusiastic interest he has provided, and for the important contribution he has made over the years in the work of heading the SOCIETY. He has continued his interest despite the increased demands of his various professional activities. It is widely appreciated that John is a talented musical director, conductor, composer, arranger, organist, pianist and entertainer.

The wide in-depth range of his musical talent seems unlimited as he flawlessly glides from classical to the latest public trends in musical tastes. He is equally at home with all the music that falls between including ragtime, jazz, show music and rock. In addition to his regular club activities he engages in considerable TV and recording work.

John is a classically trained musician. He obtained his A. R. C. T. degree as a concert pianist at the age of 16. He attended the University Of Toronto School Of Music and taught music for a period of time at St. Michael's Cathedral Choir School. John's

conservatory training has not prevented him from acquiring a genuine feeling for other musical idioms. This excellence in piano performances of classical ragtime is well-known to members of the SOCIETY.

John and his wife Anne are a busy couple. Antique collecting relating to the ragtime era is only one of their many interests. They have two children, Bob and Jennifer. Anne is an artist in her own right without the time for painting that she would like. Much of her time is devoted to her business enterprise 'MOTHER ENTERTAINMENT PROMOTIONS'.

The business side of the entertainment field also involves a proportion of John's working hours. He is associated with Broadlands Music Limited producing records on the ARPEGGIO label. Broadlands is a company that is energetically engaged in the development and promotion of Canadian artists and recordings.

Even though John is moving through an ever-expanding and successful musical career, he has retained his love of ragtime. His current club engagement began with the opening of the new Hyatt Regency Hotel at Toronto in May of this year. Blaik Kirby writing in his 'Nightlife' column in the Globe & Mail on Friday May 19, 1972 had the following to say:

ARPIN'S SOFT SELL AT THE HYATT

Toronto's top cocktail lounge pianist John Arpin has moved his trio into the Odyssey room, atop the new Hyatt Regency Hotel, where he presides over a spectacular view and makes progress in bridging the musical generation gap.

The Odyssey is definitely not a tavern for thirsty sailors en route from Troy to Ithaca. It is for prosperous, sophisticated swingers, whose code requires them to accept every sort of music with equanimity, as long as it is presented with restraint.

Arpin is expert at this game. He has unfailingly excellent musical taste, and gives a nicely judged alternation between romantic dance music and livelier stuff ranging from rock back to boogie. But since he is playing for dancing - the floor is about four times the size of his piano - he has to avoid his real specialty, which is ragtime.

He not only plays the piano (and plays with the organ) but also sings, mostly romantic tunes, in an intimate confidential style which tempts the ear but never assaults it.

Arpin's talents are plenty big enough to deserve a solo show spot - but he is not really a showy personality, and in any event this is the wrong room for that. He knows that his job is to add atmosphere, to cushion rather than dominate the lovers' cocktail chatter. The result is consistent relaxed enjoyment.

RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Biograph BLP-1005Q 'Thomas (Fats) Waller - Vol. 2 - 1924-31'

Selections: Wild Cat Blues, The Clearing House Blues, Jail House Blues, Do It Mister So-And-So, Don't Try To Take My Man Away, 18th Street Strut, If I Could Be With You, Squeeze Me, A New Kind Of Man With A New Kind Of Love For Me, I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby, I'm Coming Virginia, Nobody But My Baby.

Biograph BLP-1006Q 'Scott Joplin - 1916'

Selections: Played by Scott Joplin - Maple Leaf Rag, Something Doing, Weeping Willow Rag, Maple Leaf Rag, Ole Miss Rag, Magnetic Rag; Played by W. Arlington - Ragtime Oriole, Quality Rag, Agitation Rag, Tickled To Death, Grace And Beauty, 12th Street Rag; Played by Wm. Axtmann - Anoma, Cannon Ball.

Available from: Biograph Records, Inc.,
P. O. Box 109,
Canaan, New York 12029.

In the May-June 1971 issue of The Ragtimer, we reviewed the first four Lps in Biograph's series of Lps of hand-played piano rolls and noted, among other things, that 'none of the four is less than an excellent job.' The high standard set by those records is more than maintained by the next two releases in the series, both of which are so good, each in its own way, that it's impossible to see how either could have been improved.

As with the first four, each Lp has literate and informative liner notes by Mike Montgomery, as well as high-quality recordings of the material. Moreover, although the first four Lps had well-chosen tempos for the most part, the tempo choices on these two are uniformly excellent.

The Lp with the broadest appeal of the two is unquestionably the Waller, which includes just about all of the known Waller hand-played rolls not included in the first volume. As the two Lps programmed the rolls in chronological order, this one shows his later work when Fats had become more used to cutting rolls and presumably more relaxed with the process. In any event, we find Fats much more inventive and confident on this Lp, using breaks, fills, left-hand-melody and the other devices familiar to the Harlem ticklers, along with his own fertile imagination, to turn in swinging and satisfying performances on track after track.

Three tracks on the Lp deserve some special comment here: 'Wild Cat Blues', 'If I Could Be With You', and 'I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby'. 'Wild Cat' is not known to be hand-played by Waller, and indeed may not be hand-played at all. Because it follows, to some extent, a published version of the tune that appeared in a Clarence Williams folio, I'm inclined to guess it isn't Waller; it's a bit stiff for the Waller style, and I'd think that Fats would have deviated somewhat more from the music to put in his own ideas. However, the tune is an excellent one, among Waller's earliest compositions, and the roll version of it is quite enjoyable.

'If I Could Be With You' is one of two duet rolls (a fragment of the other was discovered shortly after the Lp was released) cut by Fats and James P. Johnson. The roll has appeared on Lp before, but not as well recorded nor with as well-chosen a tempo as here. The result is one of the high spots of the record, a swinging and inventive performance by two all-time keyboard greats. At the time of the Lp's release, it was not known whether Waller played 'I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby', which was thought to have been a reissue by Imperial, a QRS subsidiary, of Waller's then-undiscovered QRS roll. The QRS roll has since been found, and the Imperial roll on this Lp proves to have one verse and chorus identical to the QRS roll, plus other material, not played by Fats, added to fill out the roll. In any event, this is also an enjoyable rendition.

As a final note, the rare roll 'I'm Coming Virginia' offers, to my ears, one of the few examples of Waller's playing when he was not at the top of his form. The tune, generally associated with cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, has an intricate, constantly-changing chord pattern and an unusual number of bars. As with many traditional musicians who have tackled this number, Fats does not seem completely comfortable with it and, in my opinion, makes a few poor choices in substitute chords and in voicing while trying to get the performance off the ground. Even so, what he does play would be enough to hospitalize most pianists, and I doubt that any Waller fans will complain about it.

Moving from Fats Waller to Scott Joplin is quite a jump stylistically, and in doing so, one must keep in mind that Waller's style was shaped as part of the rising tide away from ragtime and toward jazz while Joplin's was developed at the turn of the century well before the lighter, jazz-tinged piano styles were commonly known. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Joplin style is, as the liner notes describe, rather a 'march' style and could not, in any sense, be characterized as 'swinging'.

This is not to say that Joplin's piano playing as demonstrated here is either poor or uninteresting. Far from it. His honest, straightforward approach to ragtime, adhering pretty strictly to the published score except for a few additional runs in the left hand, is of a generally high order and produces quite satisfying ragtime. (The one exception to this is the second version of 'Maple Leaf Rag', an unsteady, rather poor performance that may demonstrate the effects of Joplin's failing health at the time the roll was cut.) And in any event, these few examples of Joplin's playing, the only ones known to exist, are virtually indispensable to all serious ragtimers.

For comparison with Joplin, the second side of the Joplin Lp presents other rag material recorded at about the same time as Joplin's rolls. The similarity in style to Joplin's is readily apparent and indicates that Joplin's abilities could be considered as on a par with many of his contemporaries. The numbers on this side are impeccably selected, including several excellent but underrecorded rags that will delight all fans of the St.

Louis school of ragtime.

In his liner notes, Mike Montgomery offers the speculation that 'W. Arlington' and 'Wm. Axtmann' were the same person. The styles are certainly quite similar, but I detect a slightly looser, warmer approach in 'Anoma' and 'Cannon Ball' than in the others, leading me to guess, on this meager evidence, that two different pianists are involved.

These two Lps embrace a pretty wide range of ragtime styles, and perhaps someone who likes the Waller wouldn't like the Joplin, or vise versa. Maybe. Frankly, I'd say that you couldn't go wrong with either one, and I sure wouldn't be without them. My hat's off to Biograph and everyone associated with these Lps. I hope they keep up the good work.

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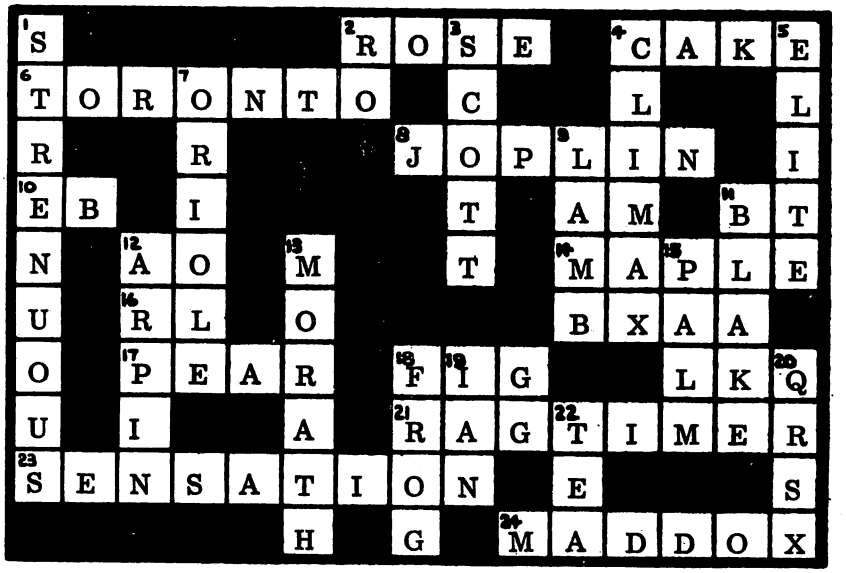
- Ragtime Crossword Puzzle -

— by I. A. Fisher —

ANSWER to puzzle published in the MAY/JUNE issue of THE RAGTIMER


1 S
2 R O 3 S E 4 C A K 5 E
6 T O R 7 O N T O C L L
R R 8 J O P 9 L I N I
10 E B I T A M 11 B T
N 12 A O 13 M T 14 M A 15 P L E
U 16 R L O B X A A
O 17 P E A R 18 F 19 I G L K 20 Q
U I A 21 R A G 22 T I M E R
23 S E N S A T I O N E S
H G 24 M A D D O X

Make Your Plans Early To Attend

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. 8th ANNUAL BASH - 1972

To be held on Saturday October 14th, at TORONTO, 3:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

In the CARA INN located on the east side of the Toronto International Airport.

The entire lower floor complex of the hotel will be available for the Bash
Foyer - Connecting Corridor - Guildhall - Peel Room
3 Pianos - Continuous Bar

PLEASE NOTE: Dinner served at 6:00 p. m. SHARP

Price $9. 00 per person (Bar service not included)
Free parking for cars

Out of town Ragtimers should plan to make the CARA INN the place to stay. (The hotel has 220 guest rooms with color TV) - It then becomes the place you are most likely to meet your fellow Ragtimers.

Room rates per day are as follows: $18. 50 - Single
$24. 50 - Double or Twin

(See Hotel Registration Card)

We are delighted to announce that hotel arrangements have been made to equal or better those of last year. There will be two large halls and the opportunity for simultaneous activities.

Arrangements have been made to obtain the use of Peel Room "A" & "B" (complete with piano) on the Friday evening, October 13th, as a reception and warmup centre for members arriving in the city a day early and for the use of local members who wish to drop in and say Hello. The anticipated time will be 8:00 p. m. to closing.

On Sunday sfternoon October 15th, the same Peel Room "A" & "B" will be available from 2:00 p. m. until 6:00 p. m. for an afterglow fellowship period for our visiting members in particular.

Please mail your registration and remittance one month in advance (by September 15th). Keep in mind that registration acceptance may have to be limited to advance registrations.

Ragtimers who decide to stay at the CARA INN have until October 1st to arrange with the Hotel for firm registrations. Reservations sought after that date will be possible but less certain. Some of our local Ragtimers may also wish to become a CARA resident for that weekend. Be sure to mention The Ragtime Society when making your reservations.

The BASH is a "Ragtime Must". The registration form is attached to this issue of THE RAGTIMER.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

ROGER HANKINS

THE PRELUDES TO MAPLE LEAF RAG

Two new words have been added to the Maple Leaf Rag vocabulary in recent months. One is the word 'Nine' and the other is a word used by Rudi Blesh in his introduction to "The Collected Works Of Scott Joplin." The Dean of ragtime scholars uses the word 'Prelude' to describe how Maple Leaf Rag heralded the start of the classic ragtime era, and how it permanently affected the careers of both composer and publisher alike. Although the word 'Prelude' is at odds with the gigantic concept of 'Nine' nevertheless the underlying concepts of both words do combine in such a way as to paint a remarkably vivid and realistic portrait of Maple Leaf Rag. Rudi Blesh says that Maple Leaf Rag is alive with announcement and expectation. This is a perfect description of the mood engendered by Maple Leaf Rag especially as it applies to the number 9.

The opening line to Maple Leaf Rag does suggest a trumpet call announcing the coming of 9, and all the music which follows is a development of this numerical statement. It is even possible to construct little individual preludes before each theme. When these preludes are extended 9 tones up the scale they fall on the very notes which are the highlights of their respective themes. These little preludes together with their 9th tones are as follows:

THEME	PRELUDE	9th TONE OF PRELUDE
1st	E-flat / A-flat	B-natural / E-natural
2nd	A-natural / B-flat	F-natural / G-flat
Trio	D-flat / D-natural	A-natural / B-flat
4th	B-flat / C-natural	G-natural / A-flat

The Prelude to Act 1 of Maple Leaf Rag consists of E-flat and A-flat which are struck by the left hand before the right hand comes into play. This little prelude, when extended 9 places, forms the outline of the E-major chord which relates to 9 in a variety of ways. One of these ways, not mentioned in the last article, is that E-major enters on the 18th beat and makes a repeat entrance on the 9th beat of both the 3rd and 4th lines.

The Prelude to Act 2 is formed by the A-natural and B-flat octaves played by the left hand with the right hand delaying its entrance once again. The 9th chromatic tones of this 2nd prelude are F-natural and G-flat. F is the 9th chromatic tone in order of appearance and G-flat is the 9th chromatic octave in order of appearance. F is struck 9 times between bars 3 and 8 and is played another 9 times in various disguises throughout the remainder of the treble clef. G-flat is struck only once but it sounds the death knell to all the frenzied activity of the 2nd theme.

The Preludes to Acts 3 and 4 are not played before their respective themes but they are found in the bass clef before the first restatement of the opening bars (4th bar/

Trio and 8th bar/Finale). A certain clockwork precision is manifest in Maple Leaf Rag when it is seen that the 9th tones B-F-A-G are, in each instance, the 9th different tones in order of appearance in their respective themes. Thus A is the 9th different tone in order of appearance in the trio but its only function is to play the role of precursor and step aside and leave the center stage to B-flat. The Prelude to Act 4 presents a little difficulty. G is the 9th different tone in order of appearance but it is also the 10th tone of the opening prelude note instead of the 9th. Of course if one wants to use B-natural as the opening note of the 4th prelude then G-natural becomes the 9th tone of the prelude in that case. However B-flat is the actual opening note of the 4th prelude and its purpose is to call attention to the presence of the many 10's at the start of the 4th theme. Since this note isn't played in advance, it doesn't spoil the surprise effect of 10. The last note of the 4th prelude (C-natural) is played in advance and it correctly predicts that Maple Leaf Rag will end with the emphasis on 9 A-flats.

Where only 1/2 of the 4th prelude is played in advance, none of the 3rd prelude (trio) is played in advance. The reason for this omission could very well be the paralysis which affects everyone when they first set eyes upon number 9 (B-flat). All four preludes are played by the left hand while the right hand does nothing but patiently await its turn to start singing much like the choral group on stage during a performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

Since all four preludes predict in advance the important developments of their respective themes they completely satisfy all the requirements which any prelude must fulfill. Furthermore they satisfy these requirements inside the space of the proverbial nutshell. It might be helpful at this point if the reader could visualize a white dwarf star in outer space. The density of these stars is so immense that a small piece, the size of a golf ball, would weigh several tons. Maple Leaf Rag should be thought of in this connection as if it had passed through a high compression chamber where its once gigantic proportions have been reduced to its present small size. Trebor Tichenor had this concept somewhat in mind when he spoke of Maple Leaf Rag as being 'packed' and having a 'tight intricate structure.' All these 2-note preludes are really indicative of something far larger, and at the very least they fulfill Shakespeare's maxim of speaking volumes in a couple of well chosen words.

In the last analysis though, it is not these 4 little preludes that are of paramount interest in terms of 9 but the overall picture of Maple Leaf Rag which is seen to be one vast prelude to the coming and going of 9. The eagerly awaited "Coming Of 9" is told in complete detail by all 4 themes of Maple Leaf Rag. This story is contained in the following thematic headings:

1st theme.	Formal announcement of the "Coming Of 9"
2nd theme.	Hectic preparations for the great event.
Repeat of 1st theme.	Final announcement of "Coming Of 9"
Trio	Arrival of 9 in overpowering splendor and majesty.
4th theme.	Transformation of world after departure of 9.

The first and second themes form one complete prelude by themselves - an announcement of some supremely important event about to take place. The clockwork precision in Maple Leaf Rag is evidenced once again by the appearance of B-flat as the 9th note of the melody line in each of the first 3 themes (Note treble upbeat in Trio). This

persistent reference to B-flat in terms of 9 represents a different kind of prelude, one that predicts a recognizable shape and form to be assumed by 9 when it finally manifests itself to the world.

Suddenly the lights go up (5 flats) at the start of the trio and number 9 advances to center stage. The effect is overwhelming. Some people are caught off guard by the absence of the usual introductory prelude, and are temporarily blinded by the brilliant sight which meets their eyes. 9 is dressed in all its splendor, its identity as B-flat almost hidden by the rich 3 and 4 note chords which supply its sartorial perfections. Nine chords contain B-flat and of these all but the last chord in bar 13 have four notes. B-flat starts off as the 9th diatonic tone of the A-flat chord but then in the 9th bar of the trio it really begins to shine as it assumes the root position for a pair of even more richly furnished chords. B-flat ends this dress rehearsal with one last chord (bar 13) and prepares for an encore.

The eyes of the onlookers have now adjusted somewhat to the unaccustomed brilliance and are able to detect some other features of B-flat brought into sharp focus during the repeat of the trio. In the first 8 bar statement B-flat appears as a single note on 9 different occasions. There is a hint of power and majesty in these single notes because every one of them land <u>On The Beat</u>. All the other single notes fall between the beats somewhere along the line. B-flat makes its final appearance in the last 8 bars of the trio where it is played another 9 times in the melody line. The 9th and final time is in the form of a single note (bar 14) which surprisingly does not fall on the beat. Obviously B-flat is showing restraint in certain aspects of 9 so as not to completely blind all of the dazzled onlookers. The bass clef in bar 13 pauses for effect on B-flat and it will be noted that B-flat is found in the last chord of each chord cluster.

Then suddenly 9 is gone. The lights are turned back to their original setting but now B-flat is no longer in its accustomed 9th position of the melody line. There is a brief period of uneasiness but this is only a temporary state of affairs as the world slowly begins to adjust. By the repeat of the 4th theme things are settling back to normal and B-flat is once again found in the 9th spot of the melody line. (Note treble upbeat). Maple Leaf Rag thus ends in an upbeat mood and the world looks forward some day to the second "Coming Of Nine."

The influence of 9 is still felt at the start of the 4th theme. Although invisible at this point it is very much alive and very active. Since B-flat is the 8th note of the melody line it is actually counteracting the effect of 10 and turning it into a pair of Nines (18). Number 9 is a lot like Harvey, the 6 foot white rabbit, who can be seen only by those who both believe in him and know where to find him. For this reason many of the important Nines get overlooked even by such a trained observer as myself. The reader should not get discouraged over a failure to spot any additional 9's in Maple Leaf Rag. There will always come a day when Maple Leaf Rag sounds particularly intoxicating and when that day comes people can see anything that they want to see. In the meantime, I'm going to take a vacation before writing another article on 9..... Like about 9 years. Maybe by that time scientists will finally have spotted Planet X which is supposed to be the 10th planet in our solar system. Should such a planet be discovered somebody will have to figure out a way to change all these Nines in Maple Leaf Rag into 10's. There is no reason why Maple Leaf Rag can't grow larger in an expanding universe.

Really The End.

SCOTT JOPLIN REDISCOVERED - PART 2

The first part of this series carried the reprint of an article by Harold C. Schonberg referring in part to the work of Joshua Rifkin.

For part 2 we turn to a review by H. Wiley Hitchcock taken from STEREO REVIEW directly concerning the Rifkin NONESUCH recording which brings considerable attention to SCOTT JOPLIN as the composer of the musical content. (Incidentally, to those who gained so much enjoyment from Rifkin's first recording of Joplin's rags, we direct your attention to the new offering on page 2 of this issue of THE RAGTIMER of a second recording of Joplin's rags by Joshua Rifkin).

"RAGTIME OF THE HIGHER CLASS"

Scott Joplin's elegant and infectious piano rags are revived on a new Nonesuch disc

By H. WILEY HITCHCOCK

Ragtime had probably existed for a long time before it rose to public consciousness and became a national mania in the 1890's. Then associated primarily with the solo piano and especially the increasingly popular player pianos, it was taken over by dance bands as well (along with blues, it was the staple of early jazz), and, in the diluted form of the cakewalk march, by such concert bands as Sousa's. After a short, happy life as vehicle for the most popular dances of the early part of the century, it faded during the 1920's as other kinds of dances and music became popular.

Ragtime's most characteristic feature was its double plane of rhythmic life: a regularly accented, even bass and a strongly cross-accented treble. Against the bass, which normally stomped along in a heavy two-beat or pranced in a brass-band-like oom-pah pattern, the treble was "ragg'd" by throwing accents onto sub-beats. This kind of rhythmic interplay was rooted in black music: it has been traced back to the "patting Juba" of Southern blacks before the Civil War, and ultimately to Afro-Caribbean dances and West African drumming. On the other hand, the form and the basic meter and tempo of rags came from Euro-American dances (quadrilles, polkas, schottisches) and especially from post-Civil War marches, with their heavy two-beat meter and their easygoing tempo. The best-known early piano rag to be published, Scott Joplin's Maple Leaf Rag is marked "Tempo di Marcia"; Joplin elsewhere indicated "Slow March Tempo" and even cautioned performers, "Notice! Don't play this piece fast, it is never right to play 'Ragtime' fast."

Although its musical sources were both black and white, ragtime itself was the product of blacks, especially of itinerant piano players in the Middle West. Scott Joplin began his career as one. Born in Texarkana, Texas, on November 24, 1868, he learned to play the piano as a boy. By 1885 he was in St. Louis, playing in honky-tonks and sporting houses. He stayed there until 1893, then went to Chicago briefly to try his luck in the entertainment halls that had sprung up around the World's Fair. In 1894 he went to Sedalia, Missouri, to stay until the turn of the century. His first published piano rag, Original Rags, came out in March, 1899; later the same year, a Sedalia music dealer issued Maple Leaf Rag, named for a saloon and dance hall in the town. The work was an instant and resounding success; Joplin's career as a composer took wing, and before his death in 1917 he was to publish more than thirty original rags, and other piano pieces,

songs, and arrangements as well, with such success that he could claim to be "King of Ragtime." He had even grander aims: in 1902 he finished a ballet score called Rag Time Dance, and in 1903 the opera A Guest Of Honor, unpublished and now lost; in 1911 came another opera Treemonisha. None of these larger works were successful. Like other American composers of popular music both before and after him (William Billings, Stephen Foster, and George Gershwin come to mind), Joplin's talent was greater than his training, and his craft as a composer was simply not up to full-evening works.

Joplin's piano rags are a different story. Within their relatively narrow confines - each is made up of four or five contrasting strains and lasts about four or five minutes - they are just about perfect music by any standard. Joplin himself was annoyed by the condescending attitude toward ragtime displayed by many of his compatriots, although he was well aware of the musical poverty of some of the rags thrown up by the wave of popularity for the genre around the turn of the century. In a brief manual of ragtime exercises published in 1908, he wrote: "That all publications masquerading under the name of ragtime are not the genuine article will be better known when these exercises are studied. That real ragtime of the higher class is rather difficult to play is a painful truth which most pianists have discovered. Syncopations are no indication of light and trashy music...."

Indeed they were not. His own rags can only be described as elegant, varied often subtle, and as sharply incised as a cameo. They are the precise American equivalent, in terms of a native style of dance music, of minuets by Mozart, mazurkas by Chopin, or waltzes by Brahms. They can be both lovely and powerful, infectious and moving.

For a new Nonesuch release, pianist Joshua Rifkin has chosen to record eight rags spanning Joplin's published career, from his earliest great success, Maple Leaf Rag, to his last completed composition, Magnetic Rag. The increasing sophistication of Joplin's musical thought through the years is fascinating to follow on the disc. (With one exception, Rifkin presents the pieces in chronological order.) Maple Leaf is an infectiously straightforward, "happy," march-based piece. The Entertainer (1902) surprises one with its... well, tenderness, and also with its contrapuntal interest. The Ragtime Dance (1906) was pieced together by Joplin from his ballet score; schottische and polka lie behind several of its strains. Gladiolus Rag (1907) is a minor masterpiece and one of the few rags which grow cumulatively, from quiet start to thunderous close. Fig Leaf Rag (1908) is remarkable for its varied textural and registral interest - Joplin wrote all over the keyboard in this one - and for the harmonic adventures in its last strain. But the peak of Joplin's development as an exploiter of keyboard textures, of far-ranging harmonies, and of concise, cogent, unstereotyped forms is reached in the last three rags offered here: Scott Joplin's New Rag (1912), Euphonic Sounds (1909), and Magnetic Rag (1914). The last, Joplin's valedictory, is a dark, dense-textured work that projects an extraordinary sense of power and pride but ends somewhat surprisingly (and prophetically?) with a tiny, poignant coda - not a bang but a whimper.

For those whose image of ragtime piano playing is a beery pianist whacking away at an out-of-tune upright, colorlessly ringing the changes on a few mechanical, ricky-ticky rhythms, Rifkin's performances will come as a shock and a revelation. He plays all of these works with great stylishness, not only with the appropriate stomping, driving, or sometimes just teasing rhythms but with the broad range of expressivity the composer demands. Some may claim his playing is unauthentic, too "pretty," or too

"classical," but they will be confusing the music as Joplin wrote it either with their experience of piano-roll rags, in which everything is by definition helplessly monochromatic, because the air pressure which activates the keys is unvarying, or of barroom pianists trying to compete with chit-chat and clinking glasses. In fact, Joplin wrote into his music many changes of dynamic level and other indications of expression, and Rifkin is faithful to these. He treats the music with both affection and repect; his is no player-piano approach, and I think Scott Joplin, who considered his works not "light and trashy" music but "ragtime of the higher class," would definitely approve. Moreover, for this recording, whose sound has remarkable presence to begin with, Rifkin must have found the kind of piano the American virtuoso Louis Moreau Gottschalk once spoke of in his journal, a "monster" with a tail three feet in width and ten feet long: the piano sound, from deepest bass to highest treble, is marvelously rich. Finally, the jacket notes written by Rifkin himself - he is, among other things, a brilliant young musicologist - are exemplary: broadly informative, impeccably precise, and gracefully written.

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MUSIC REPRINT CLUB NEWS
CHAPTER VII

First Mailout - Eight reprints are included in this group.

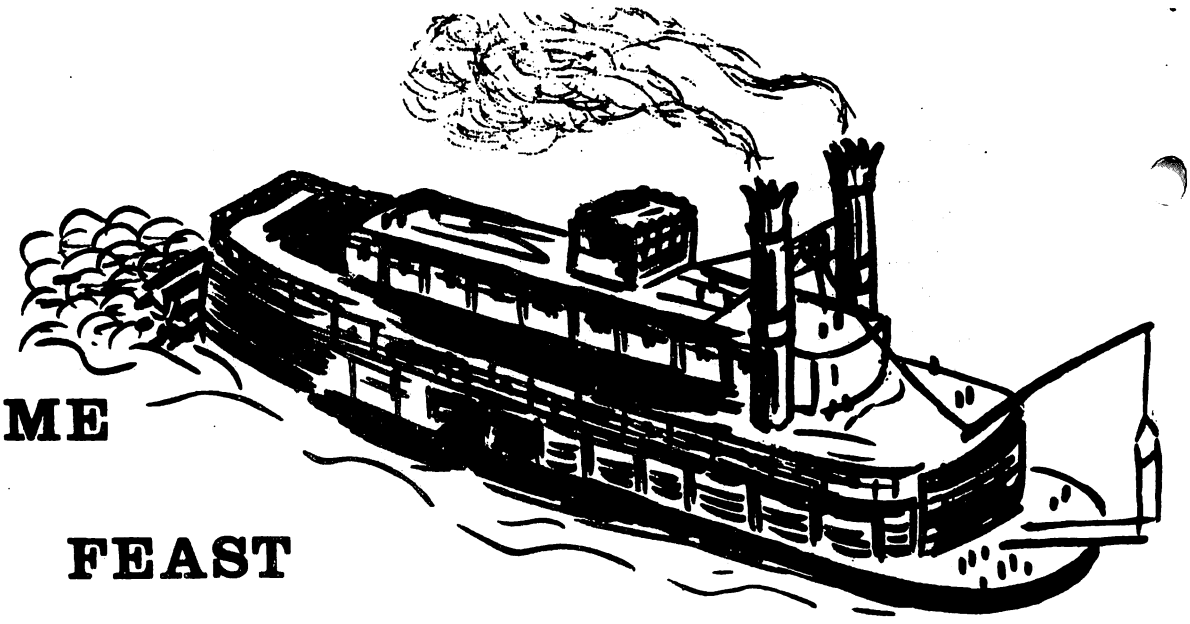
The Red Devil Rag 1910 (Lucien Denni) J. W. Jenkins Son's Music Co.
Candle-Stick Rag 1914 (Abe Olman) Mentel Bros. Pub. Co.
Carnation Rag - Two Step 1903 (Clyde Douglass) John Stark & Son
Rhapsody Rag 1911 (Harry Jentes) Maurice Shapiro
Dixie Flyer Cakewalk - Two Step 1901 (A. E. Henrich) H. A. French
Mardi Gras Rag 1914 (Lyons & Yosco) Geo. W. Meyer Music Co.
Silence and Fun 1904 (Charles E. Mullen) Will Rossiter
Sponge - Rag Two Step 1911 (W. C. Simon) W. C. Simon New Orleans

"The Red Devil Rag" (See back cover of THE RAGTIMER) is by the composer of the popular song "Oceana Roll". "Carnation Rag" is an early rag resembling the Joplin approach so dear to the heart of John Stark, the publisher. The last strain appears to draw on the same source as that carried into the later compositions "The St. Louis Tickle" and "Buddy Bolden's Blues". "Rhapsody Rag" provides a tasteful distillation of the European music masters into classical ragtime with pleasing results. "Sponge" comes from Canal Street and the so-called birthplace of jazz, but the composition bears the stamp of the Eastern ragtime school represented by such pianists as Eubie Blake and Luckeyeth Roberts. All the reprints should offer a pleasant and entertaining challenge.

NOTICE: It is not too late to join the REPRINT CLUB - CHAPTER VII. The membership fee is $10. 00 for each enrollment. Simply mail your name and address on a separate piece of paper marked REPRINT CLUB - CHAPTER VII and enclose your subscription. If interested, please do so promptly and send it to:

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc., P. O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada.

A RAGTIME FEAST



RAGTIME RAGES at the ST. LOUIS LEVEE

by JACK CUFF

The Goldenrod Showboat supplied the setting for the 8th Annual National Ragtime Festival, 1972, from Wednesday June 7th until Sunday afternoon June 11th.

Emphasis this year for entertainment went in the direction of bands. The official headliners were:

The Dawn Of The Century Ragtime Orchestra - Los Angeles
The Happy Jazz Band - San Antonio
The Boll Weevil Jass Band - Michigan
The Salty Dogs - Chicago
The Mudcats - Southern Illinois University
The St. Louis Ragtimers - Resident band

Despite the presence of four jazz bands the collective repertoire of those groups drew heavily on the traditional music played by the ragtime bands of New Orleans from the turn of the century up to the start of the twenties. The crowds loved it as they soaked up a showering of blues come stomps come dixieland.

There was a marked faithfulness to ragtime in the Dawn Of The Century Ragtime Orchestra's performances as well as those of the St. Louis Ragtimers. The Dawn Of The Century's group conformance to the written arrangements of the period displayed a remarkable adherence to discipline. The cohesive results produces a pleasant and nostalgic listening experience. Their devotion to strictness in playing, was even more realized and appreciated when individual members of the orchestra met all the tests of freewheeling performances in all-in band sessions which took place after hours out on the levee. The St. Louis Ragtimers were up to their usual entertaining form. They never fail to prove they are worth a special trip to St. Louis just to hear them working alone.

On the final (Saturday) night Jean Kittrell and blues singer Olive Brown did some vocals to band accompaniments.

Sunday afternoon provided a new feature of ragtime piano for silent movie two reel comedies. Messrs Tichenor of St. Louis, Zimmerman of Los Angeles, Waldo of Columbus and Klink of Washington did the honors at the piano in rotation. It was a fun

session.

In the department of Classic Ragtime, the performances at the piano by Terry Waldo were a special treat. It was exciting too to listen to Bob Seeley from Detroit as he alternated stride piano with boogie.

The Toronto delegation had an enjoyable social experience, as a bonus, in meeting so many acquaintances. The membership of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY was heavily represented and in many instances taking part in the music-making proceedings.

Charles Oswald writing June 9, 1972 for the Globe-Democrat in St. Louis said in part:

"If the Goldenrod Showboat hadn't been chained to the St. Louis Levee --- it would've rocked down the river. People from as far away as Canada and Mexico came to listen and play in a city where ragtime originated at the turn of the century. From Texas - Austin that is - there came Ben Conroy --- Ben hasn't missed the festival since it was instituted in 1965. He's a pianist and he plays as much as he listens. Conroy termed the festival a "kind of middleaged Woodstock," and added, "We don't smoke pot; we smoke cigars, but we have a hell of a good time". In the Captain's Dining Room on the second deck, the St. Louis Ragtimers blasted out with "The Mississippi Rag", one of the first ragtime compositions ever published. In the Main Deck Barroom, Nashville pianist Charles Booty pounded out "The Barrelhouse Rag". The festival is expected to draw more than 10, 000 ragtime lovers during its four-night stand. If you can't make it, turn your ear riverward - you might catch a few nostalgic notes of the 1900's."

Then there was that special charter voyage of the Mississippi Belle between the end of the Saturday festivities and the dawn of Sunday morning, and the additional music that went with it.

The festival is open to the public. It is difficult to speak of success in negative terms. The Goldenrod Showboat remains the same size but total attendance rose sharply this year to the point that either the festival will have to be moved to a larger accomodation (a dreadful thought) or something will have to be done to relieve the overcrowding. That observation concerns future festivals. The 8th Annual National Ragtime Festival was an unqualified success.

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RAGTIME... UNDER YOUR HAT Cont'd from Page 3.

knowledge that it will be treated with greater respect and understanding from now on. A letter from Roger mentioned that he had used the word "Splendor" on two occasions in this article. He mused that we as a Canadian Society might wish to change the spelling to conform with our own practice which would result in the more appropriate "9" letter word "splendour". It seems to us that if adding planet "X" makes "10", and we leave the "8" letter word "splendor" alone, the addition of those two numbers will bring us to a total of "18" and a restoration of the pattern of "9s" - thus escaping the possibility of a muddled situation - we leave that thought for Roger and You.

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

I am enclosing a review of a recent show by our local barbershop chorus in which I performed. My band played in their show last year, and they hired me to do a single for them this year. The chorus is excellent (regional champions), with a good local following, and its annual show is always a sellout. This year the theme was an old-time melodrama, and they hired me to play an overture to each act on the piano. I was up on stage, in costume, and did some comedy business during the first act as well. It was a lot of fun, principally because I rarely get to play piano in public around my home town because I'm doing so much work on cornet with my band. The overture to the first act was a ragtime medley of five songs the chorus was going to do; I worked up a special solo for the overture to the second act, and then found out that my arrangement was so difficult that I had to work pretty hard to get it down in time. But I did, and it was a lot of fun.

Tex Wyndham,
Mendenhall, Pa., U.S.A.

(Ed. Comment - This is a great example of what can be done in blending ragtime with other activities. Two excerpts from the review mentioned above by Philip F. Crosland from the Wilmington Delaware Evening Journal of March 20, 1972 under the heading "Drama in a Barbershop")

> Like the first robin and the removal of snow tires a traditional harbinger of spring is the annual "Harmony on Parade" program of the Wilmington chapter of barbershop singers.
>
> This year's 28th edition, presented Saturday night and yesterday afternoon at Salesianum School, turned to the old fashioned melodrama for its theme of "The Plight of Polly Prudence."
>
> Both acts began with the delightful ragtime piano playing of Tex Wyndham - a happy way to start just about anything.

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I have quite a long list of wanted music. Shy and Sly by Luckeyeth Roberts and The Frosty Rag head the list. I also have copies of numbers that others might desire. Would it be possible to submit want lists for publication in THE RAGTIMER to make it possible for members to exchange wanted music (photocopies)?

Russell J. Stettler,
4620 Hamilton Blvd.,
Allentown, Pa., 18103, U.S.A.

(Ed. Comment - It has been the practice of THE RAGTIMER to minimize, on a selective basis, the use of publicity material and to avoid publishing advertising copy and the trading post type of requests and offerings from members and others. Because of space limitations, an attempt to provide content having broad appeal, and the need to organize for the added work involved, we have hesitated to establish a policy and the rules for accepting paid display and classified advertisements. In the event we change our practice, members will be so informed. Meanwhile perhaps members who can help Russell out or are interested in exchanging copies of music may wish to contact him.)

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Members may be interested in contacting member Tony Hagert who is involved in the auctioning of sheet music by mail - lists include Piano Rags and Cakewalks. Tony also plays trumpet in The New Sunshine Jazz Band. Their first record is called SUNSHINE - Fat Cat - 115 with vocals by Johnson "Fat Cat" McRee. Extensive liner notes were written by Tony. Contains bright and breezy renditions of early jazz numbers and also includes Eubie Blake's "Fizz Water." Interested members should write for particulars to:

Thornton Hagert,
Vernacular Music Research,
1601 North Randolph Street,
Arlington, Virginia, 22207, U.S.A.

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My new FINGERBUSTIN' RAGTIME - LP on Blue Goose - 3001 - is now available.

David A. Jasen,
Flushing, N.Y., U.S.A.

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A tip of our hat to member Robert L. Thompson whose group the RED ONION JAZZ BAND of Leonia, New Jersey took part in the 3rd Annual Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stomp. The first two stomps raised in excess of $4,000 for the Pee Wee Russell Musical Scholarship Fund at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University. All of the musicians donated their time and talent to this annual affair held in the Martinsville Inn at Martinsville, New Jersey. The audience demonstrated its appreciation of Bob's group and for Natalie Lamb who handled the vocals. The late Tony Parenti, Bobby Hackett and Marion McPartland made guest appearances. Several other bands were in attendance at the 3rd annual event held on February 13, 1972.

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Member Lee R. Munsick advises us that he plans to hold periodic mail auctions of piano rolls. Any interested members can obtain particulars by writing directly to Lee at

Nostalgia,
133 Meyersville Road,
Gillette, N.J., 07933, U.S.A.

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Members who have a fun interest in the bygone days of yesteryears may be interested in a magazine named "OLD STUFF." The cost is $3.00 per year. The address is: Old Stuff, 1233 Janesville Ave., Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, 53538, U.S.A.

The content is described in verse:

Old stamps, remedies, songs and cars,
Old paintings, clothes, candy and jars -
Old friends, manners, jokes and rhymes,
Old sayings, tales, etchings and times -
Old books, canes, and things galore,
Old silver, pottery and much, much more.

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The Dawn of the Century Ragtime Orchestra has brought out a second album called "Silks & Rags" - another collection of rare band arrangements from the turn-of-the-century. To obtain this album write to: The Maple Leaf Club, 5560 West 62nd Street, Los Angeles, California, 90056, U.S.A.

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SOMETHING DOING...

ROBERT ACKERMAN - appearing regularly at the Smith College Faculty Club in Northampton, Mass.

JOHN ARPIN - in the Odyssey Lounge at the top of the Hyatt Regency, Toronto, 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

CHARLES DAVIS JR. - at the Last Chance Saloon at Ghost Town in the Sky, Maggie Valley, N. C. until Labor Day.

JOHN MADDOX - at Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Col., July 3rd. to Aug. 26th. at Arlington Park Towers, Chicago, Ill., Sept. 4th. to Oct. 14th

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Mich., Fri. Nights.

MAX MORATH - on the road with his show "At The Turn Of The Century".

CHARLIE RASCH - & "Sister Kate" with the Jacktown Jazz Band, at Bill Cones' Downstairs Saloon, Jackson, Mich., Fri. & Sat. Nights.

RICHARD SKRIKA - and band playing this summer at the Fountain Saloon, 275 New Scotland Ave., Albany N. Y.

TREBOR TICHENOR - and the Saint Louis Ragtimers can be heard on The Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri.

PETER TURNER - with the Apex Jazz Band, at the Sword In Hand, Bury, St. Edmund's, England.

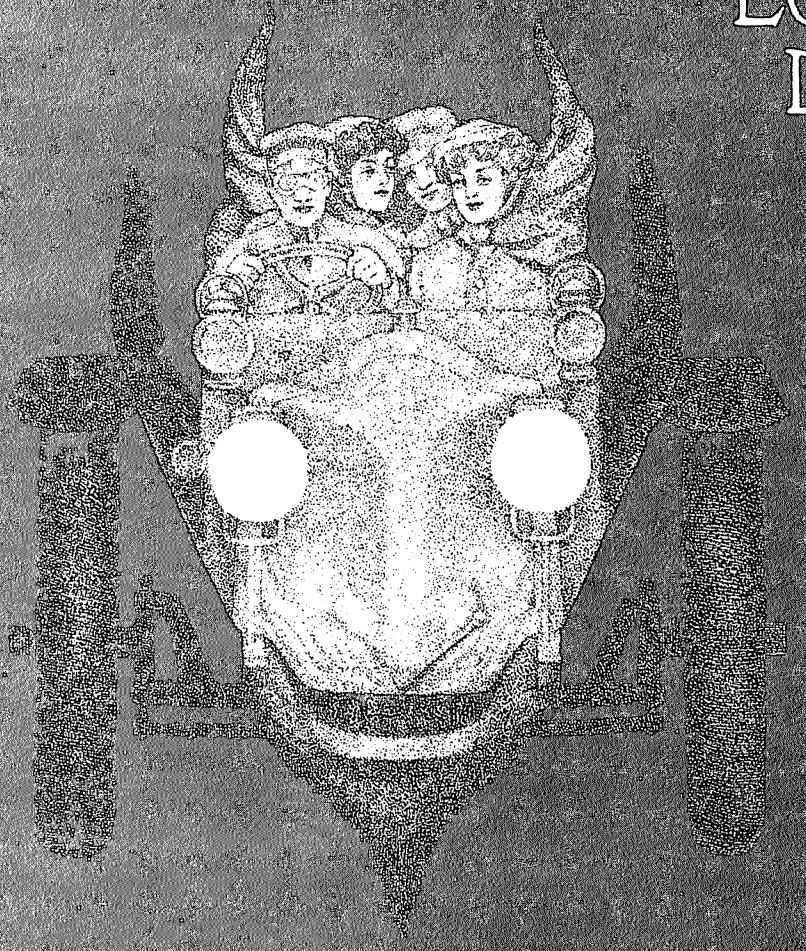
TERRY WALDO - at Deibel's Restaurant, German Village, Columbus, Ohio, Wed. & Thurs. Nights.

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly, at The Surry Restaurant, 1100 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

RED DEVIL

BY
LUCIEN
DENNI



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ORCHESTRA

PUBLISHERS
J. W. Jenkins Son's Music Co.
KANSAS CITY, MO.